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SUBJECT: ANDHRA PRADESH POLICE KILL KEY MAOIST LEADERS

11. (SBU) Consulate sources say police in Andhra Pradesh struck a significant blow against Maoist (also known as Naxalite) efforts to reinvigorate the declining insurgency in the South Indian state. On October 28 Andhra Pradesh police killed two members of the Maoists' Andhra Pradesh Special Committee in separate encounters in the state. Police and media sources told post that police officers killed Valluri Venkata Rao (aka Kailasam) in Vizianagaram district (located along the Andhra Pradesh - Orissa border) and Thota Gangadhar (aka Ramachander) in Guntur district. According to K. Srinivas Reddy, Hyderabad Bureau Chief for The Hindu, the Maoist's Central Committee established the Andhra Pradesh Special Committee especially to revive the Maoist movement in the state after years of decline there. Andhra Pradesh police statistics tell a tale of decreasing Maoist activity in recent years. Incidents of Maoist violence declined 42 percent in 2007 over the previous year's figures; Maoists killed only 40 civilians in 2007 compared to 211 in 12005.

12. (SBU) Reddy described the killings as a "severe jolt" to the insurgency. Both of the deceased Maoists were "legendary figures" in the Maoist ranks, according to Reddy, who joined the insurgency in the early 1980s. A senior police contact said he expected the killings to further erode the Maoists' morale, but cautioned that police counter-insurgency operations and Maoist violence will continue in the coming months in the run-up to state and national elections in Andhra Pradesh.

13. (SBU) Comment: Andhra Pradesh has scored a big victory by killing two members of the Andhra Pradesh Special Committee, which was set up expressly to help get the Andhra Pradesh insurgency back on its feet. Maoist literature that we have recently come across makes it clear that the insurgents hold a serious grudge against Andhra Pradesh's Greyhounds anti-Maoist unit and are eager to reestablish themselves in the state, which was once one of their major strongholds. We take it seriously when K. Srinivas Reddy, who is an honest analyst of the conflict, says the killings were a significant blow to the Maoist's efforts in Andhra Pradesh. End comment.

14. (U) Consulate General Hyderabad reviewed this cable.

SIMKIN